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Issue 2 | April 2007

HGZine

Free Magazine For Handheld Gamers. Read it, Print it, Send it to your mates...

HUGE DS REVIEW!

Lunar Knights

The vampire slaying sleeper hit uncovered

THEY'RE BACK!

Final Fantasy

Every new FF title previewed

MySims

Tiny people on your DS!



PLUS!

Harvest Moon

The history, the future, the secrets...



FULL REVIEWS!

DS

Phoenix Wright
And a sequel for all!



PSP

Prince of Persia
Rival Swords clash on PSP



DS

Spectrobes
Creature discomforts



PLUS!

The latest mobile games revealed and rated



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Welcome to HGZine



Hello again! And from the masses of positive feedback we received for issue one (thanks to all those who sent in emails) it seems lots of you agree that it's about time handheld gaming got the coverage it deserves.

There's plenty more in issue two, with a great cover game in the shape of Lunar Knights, and info-packed features on the Final Fantasy and Harvest Moon series' so you'll be bang up to date when the new titles arrive on DS and PSP throughout this year. Elsewhere, we have a revealing playtest of Call of Duty: Roads to Victory – we managed to secure *almost* finished code from Activision. And Phoenix Wright is back with more legal shenanigans.

Please do keep your comments and suggestions coming in – I read all of them and some will find their way into issue three...

READER FEEDBACK!
Click here to tell us what you think of the new issue!

Keith Stuart, Editor
HGzine@gamerzines.com

MEET THE TEAM



Ed Fear

Ed has totally overdosed on Final Fantasy for our feature and now lives entirely in turn-based battle sequences.



Chris Schilling

The regular GamesTM writer brings his many years of (virtual) farming experience to the big Harvest Moon feature.

DON'T MISS!

This month's highlights

Lunar Knights

MUST-SEE REVIEW Give those vampires a good kicking. PAGE 19

DS

Phoenix Wright And Justice for All

We'll see you in court! P22

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Final Fantasy

Why the RPG series will dominate your life in '07. P13

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Call of Duty

We dutifully follow the Roads To Victory. P10

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Harvest Moon

Green fingers at the ready! P16

QUICK FINDER

Every game's just a click away!

SONY PSP

Tomb Raider Anniversary Harvest Moon Final Fantasy Call of Duty: Roads to Victory Prince of Persia: Rival Swords PSP News Roundup PSP Reviews Roundup

NINTENDO DS

MySims Harvest Moon Final Fantasy Lunar Knights Phoenix Wright: And Justice For All Spectrobes

DS News Roundup

DS Reviews Roundup

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News
Reviews



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DS



Publisher: EA
 Developer: Maxis
 Heritage: The Sims
 Link: www.mysims.com
 ETA: Autumn

Each building can be constructed according to your own crazed architectural concepts.



More clothing options can be unlocked as you progress through the game.



VIDEO TRAILER
[Click here to see MySims in action](#)



MySims

Build your own world...

What's the story?

The Sims are back with an entirely new game structure, specially designed for the Wii and DS. This time it's all about building and personalising your own town.

What do we know?

Seemingly aimed at a younger audience, MySims employs cartoon-style visuals and puts the emphasis on creative play rather than dating, working and social experimentation. It's all about creating your 'toy-like' sim – giving them a cool haircut, clothes and accessories - then exploring the town, helping other characters like busy Mayor Marshall and Italian chef Gino Delicioso. It seems that completing specific tasks will be involved here – like building a lab for the local mad scientist - although EA is keen to point out that MySims is all about freedom and self-expression. Man. As you explore you unlock new items such as decorations and building blocks to construct new forms of architecture to suit your own individual style. Everything from jukeboxes to shops can be designed from scratch.

With this emphasis on chatting to people and personalizing your character and surroundings, its no coincidence MySims sounds so much like MySpace – this is sort of a cute fictional representation of everyone's favourite social networking site.

When do we get more?

We're hoping to get an interview with the development team next issue! For now, you can go to www.mysims.com

Anything else to declare?

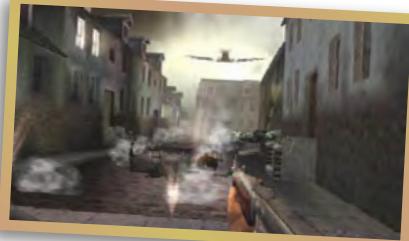
Interestingly as players build their individual towns, the inhabitants take on the characteristics of their surroundings – construct a gothic ghost town and pale faced weirdos will slump through the streets. Go for primary colours and you'll get happy, smiley residents. If only town planning were this easy in real life.

LATEST NEWS

OUT MARCH 30TH



14 new Single-player missions and multiple Multiplayer modes in which you battle as an American, Canadian and British soldier.



Play through intense battles as never before seen on the PSP.



Together with your squad, take on enemies through a variety of combat missions.

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CALL OF DUTY®

ROADS TO VICTORY



Call of Duty®: Roads to Victory brings the cinematic intensity and chaos of battle to handheld fans for the first time in an all-new gameplay experience that allows you to take the #1 WWII first-person action game on the go. Featuring all-new missions **Call of Duty®: Roads to Victory** thrusts players into the boots of an 82nd Airborne Division infantry soldier, a Canadian First Army rifleman and an elite British Parachute Regiment commando. Featuring a completely unique set of challenges that include mounted machine gun battles, sniper encounters and aircraft attacks, **Call of Duty®: Roads to Victory** puts you into the fast-paced action and adrenaline-pumping intensity of Call of Duty.

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REPLAY THIS VIDEO

PSP

Publisher: Eidos
Developer: Crystal Dynamics
Heritage: Tomb Raider: Legend, Legacy of Kain
Link: www.crystald.com
ETA: May



Bang, bang, bang.
Three dead dinosaurs.



Lara dives back in time to the good old days of Tomb Raider.

Lara always was a dab hand at the triple jump.



"The plot will apparently reveal some more secrets about Lara's past"

Lara's searching for the ancient artefact The Scion. It's not up there though love...

The tweaked Tomb Raider: Legend engine looks the biz on the PSP.



LATEST VIDEO TRAILER
Click here to see Lara in action



Tomb Raider: Anniversary

Plundering graves since 1996...

LATEST NEWS

What's the story?

To celebrate the 10th anniversary of Tomb Raider, Eidos has lined up a special new instalment of the platform-leaping adventure series, with Lara re-visiting many of the haunts from her very first title.

What do we know?

The game is under development at Crystal Dynamics (the new lords of the Tomb Raider universe since Core Design dropped the ball with Angel of Darkness) and is on course for a May release. It's using an enhanced version of the recent Tomb Raider: Legend engine, but will be taking the original Tomb Raider as its main inspiration. The plot, which features Lara searching for an ancient artefact named The Scion, takes her to several classic environments including Peru, Greece and Egypt. She'll also meet some familiar enemies like wolves, bears and the mighty T. Rex. And naturally it turns out that there's more to the shadowy syndicate that hires her than initially meets the eye. You know, for a clever archeologist, Croft should spend more time researching her clients...



When do we get more?

We've been promised an interview with the development team for issue 3.

Anything else to declare?

The plot will apparently reveal some more secrets about Lara's past. As she's clearly got more hidden skeletons than a Blackpool ghost train, it could be another ten years before we truly get to the bottom of it all...

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PSP

Incoming

Coming soon to your handheld



ROUGH CUTS

More PSP games...



COMING SOON

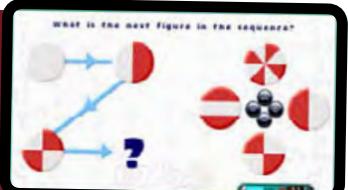
Call of Duty: Roads to Victory (March 23)... Tony Hawk's Project 8 (March)... Dungeons and Dragons Tactics (March)... Capcom Puzzle World (March)... UEFA Champions League (March)... Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six: Vegas (March)... Prince of Persia Rival Swords (March)... Virtua Tennis 3 (March)... Championship Manager 2007 (March)... Elder Scrolls Travels: Oblivion (TBC)...



Championship Manager 2007

Publisher: Eidos | ETA: Spring

According to developer Gusto Games, CM 2007 has been re-written from the turf up as a new, intuitive take on the simulation classic. Managers now have a closer control over the action, designing their own set-piece routines, dealing with the medium scrum and giving inspirational speeches before key games. To accompany the main 20-season career mode there are new quick challenge modes, plus a Wi-Fi head-to-head battle mode for budding Wenger vs Mourinho rivalries. A comprehensive transfer negotiation system heads the list of other backroom additions. Eidos will need to put out a strong side to counter the attacking might of Football Manager.



Hot Brain

Publisher: Midway

ETA: Summer

Ever since Nintendo's

Brain Training title became a worldwide smash hit, every Tom, Clever Dick and Harry has been working on his own puzzle-filled mini-game compendium. This entry from Midway looks like it follows the familiar recipe, presenting a series of short challenges divided into five areas: logic, memory, maths, language and concentration. As well as the main test mode there are multiplayer competitive events so you can see who's cleverest in your family or group of mates. Never a good idea.

Dungeons and Dragons: Tactics

Publisher: Atari | ETA: March 23

PSP owners are about to get their first taste of authentic Dungeons and Dragons action courtesy of this faithful turn-based adventure apparently based on the D&D 3.5 rule-set.

Whatever that means. This is sword and sorcery action in the classic mould with players choosing a race and class of character then battling through Tolkien-inspired set-pieces. Support for both competitive and co-op multiplayer gaming via Wi-Fi should capture some of the feel of the original pencil and dice experience.

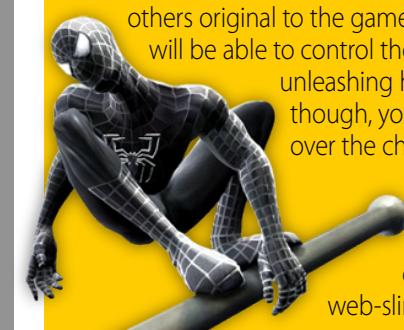


Spider-Man 3

Publisher: Activision | ETA: May

Timed cleverly to coincide with the blockbuster movie sequel, Activision's film tie-in once again

presents a free-roaming New York, allowing players to pick and choose their own missions, some based on the movie script, others original to the game. And for the first time, players will be able to control the dark black-suited Spider-Man unleashing heightened powers. Apparently, though, you'll need to wrestle for control over the character against his darker instincts. A new, highly varied combat system with a range of unlockable moves, plus several gigantic boss battles, add to the web-slinging drama.



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DS

inCOMING

Coming to a dualscreen near you!

**Sim City DS**

Publisher: EA | ETA: TBC

Yes, Electronic Arts has confirmed a UK release for its intriguing mini version of the town planning classic. As well as building your own little cities, there are new DS features such as blowing into the microphone to put out fires and signing off on mayoral proclamations with the stylus. EA is also promising some kind of Wi-Fi social element. We can't wait!

**Mega Man Star Force**

Publisher: Capcom | ETA: Autumn

Featuring a whole new story and loads of fresh characters, Mega Man Star Force promises a mix of card battling and action RPG exploration. Set thousands of years in the future, players control a young hero, Subaru, who battles aliens in both the real and cyber worlds. The complex battle card fighting system looks compelling, while a multiplayer co-op feature should bring in a fun social element. Don't try to understand the story, though. We got totally lost.

Meteos: Disney Magic

Publisher: Disney | ETA: June

The excellent screen-clearing puzzler from Q Entertainment is getting a Disney makeover with a new storyline that involves Jiminy Cricket and Tinkerbell trying to put the Disney Storybook vault back into order. It's still all about shifting shapes around the screen to get matching ones together, but now with added Disney characters! There are gameplay tweaks, too, so it's not just cosmetic. Perish the thought.

**ROUGH CUTS**

More DS games...

**Impossible Mission**

Publisher: System 3 | ETA: Spring/Summer

The original Impossible Mission was a classic – and very tough – platformer from the eighties, famous for its advanced animation and speech samples. Now it's back with fresh visuals, although most of the game elements remain intact. It's all about raiding the secret lab of mad genius Professor Atombender and stopping his plan for world domination. Tense, gripping stuff, just right for DS and PSP.

**Panzer Tactics**

Publisher: 10Tacle | ETA: Spring

Fans of Advance Wars should be licking their tactical lips at the prospect of this WWII strategy title. It's a turn-based affair with players taking control of soldiers, tanks and other vehicles against highly intelligent AI foes (or another human commander). The campaigns are based around historically accurate encounters, and although the controls look to be intuitive expect a deep, engrossing challenge.

**Touchmaster**

Publisher: Midway | ETA: Summer

Based on the popular series of pub and arcade machines, this collection of 23 mini-games promises to have something for everyone, including solitaire, pairs, trivia and mah jong derivatives. The DS version will be supported by the Midway Tournament Network, which allows players to head online via Wi-Fi to view high score rankings, tournaments and daily rankings. Might be just the job for those dull summer holiday flights.

**COMING SOON**

Guilty Gear Dust Strikers (March 30)... Harvest Moon DS (April 13)... Hotel Dusk Room 215 (April 13)... Lost in Blue 2 (April 13)... Pokémon Diamond/Pearl (April)... Diner Dash (April)
Diddy Kong Racing DS (April 20)... Final Fantasy III (Spring)... Zendoku (Spring)... Legend of Zelda: The Phantom Hourglass (June 1)... Lost (June)... Elite Beat Agents (July)

MOBILE NEWS

All the latest from the world of mobile phone gaming



Panzer Tactics

Publisher: Handy Games | **ETA:** Spring | **Link:** www.handy-games.com

We covered the soon-to-be-released DS version of this heavyweight WWII strategy game in our incoming section (see page 07). Well, there's a mobile iteration coming too, and it promises to be an accurate rendition featuring the same intricate turn-based battles, each involving actual historical encounters. Developer Handy Games is an expert in mobile strategy titles, handling the Townsmen series as well as 1941: Frozen Front and 1805: French Empire so this should be unmissable stuff for mobile tacticians.



Townsmen 4

Publisher: Handy Games | **ETA:** March 20 | **Link:** www.handy-games.com

The Townsmen series of town-building strategy titles has been a cult success on mobile, cunningly shrinking the gameplay of PC classics like Civilization and Settlers to fit on your phone. In this fourth title you take on the role of head monk in a growing monastery, looking to gain power and glory in medieval Europe. You even get to brew your own beer, carefully overseeing the fermentation process. Cheers!

Ark-Annoyed

Publisher: Game Snacks | **ETA:** March | **Link:** www.freegamesnacks.com

The silly title gives it away, but this block-busting puzzler is a new take on vintage computer game, Arkanoid. Simply use your bat to smash the bricks at the top of the screen – but here's the twist: in this version there's only ever one brick, it just gets smaller as you progress through the levels. There's a four-player competition mode, plus you can send your records to an online highscore table.



Rayman Kart

Publisher: Gameloft | **ETA:** March | **Link:** www.gameloft.com

France's answer to Mario is back with this funky mobile racer. Very much in the Mario Kart mould, Rayman Kart has you guiding the invisible-limbed hero – or one of his many cohorts – around a series of fast, funky circuits. Naturally, there are loads of weapon pick-ups for bashing rival drivers, and the mix of locations takes in spooky graveyards and icy tundras. Karting games haven't fared too well on mobile so far – can Rayman rise to the (considerable) challenge?



Office Wars

Publisher: Vivendi | **ETA:** Spring | **Link:** www.vgmobile.com

Why bother actually going to the office when you can simulate all the fun of working from the safety of your mobile? That's the concept behind this neat looking strategy sim – you're a lowly junior who must navigate the crazy world of office politics to become boss of five different companies. There are several dodgy characters to play as, from a stoic secretary to an angry union boss. The isometric graphics have a fun cartoon look.

Chew Man Fu

Publisher: Hudson | **ETA:** Spring | **Link:** www.hudsonent.com

The mobile games scene is packed with puzzle titles but few have the heritage of this oddly titled specimen. Based on the 1990 classic, which first appeared on the cult TurboGrafx-16 console, players roll four coloured spheres onto the screen to match up with tiles of the same hue while avoiding enemies. Each sphere has different abilities within the game world, making for a varied strategic challenge. Sounds hazy, but one go and you're addicted... at least if they've got this phone version just right.

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Publisher: Activision

Developer: Amaze

Heritage: The Legend of

Spyro: A New Beginning,

Lego Star Wars II: The

Original Trilogy (DS),

Pirates of the Caribbean:

Dead Man's Chest (PSP)

Link: www.activision.com

ETA: March 23rd, 2007

PSP

SPECIAL REPORT

Call of Duty: Roads to Victory

Activision brings its award-winning Call of Duty to PSP in an arresting debut

The first handheld title in Activision's ever-advancing Call of Duty series focuses on the liberation of Paris in, as if you need reminding, the Second World War. Players are cast variously as an 82nd Airborne Division infantry soldier, a Canadian First Army rifleman and an elite British Parachuting Regiment commando. Time with each character is spent working through a series of missions to re-enact an incrementally unique version of dark history.

Given that the PSP is now

RAIL GUN TYCOON

Get ready for heavy weaponry

Occasionally, if you're able to kill the German manning a rail gun (MG-88), you'll be able to procure it to the allies' cause. At other points you'll be required to use a pair of binoculars to call in artillery strikes on German armour (clicking on a target marks it with red smoke) as well as stealing a Panzershrek to take out tanks in close backstreet firefights.



You can read about every vehicle you encounter.

comfortably settling into middle age the game's visuals are miraculously arresting right from the off. Sprawling luxuriously across the PSP widescreen, the bleak greys and browns of Normandy's rainy skies and shell-pocked buildings juxtapose with the fierce red and furious yellows of muzzle fire and burning scenery.

It's one of the best looking PSP games yet seen, the grim and disorientating scenes as you work your



You're accompanied by two other soldiers through most levels – they provide vocal instruction and support throughout.

way from street corner to corner no less poignant for their miniaturisation. Levels are tightly corridorised in order to achieve the high graphical quality – there are few expansive vistas to be seen but, nevertheless, the choreography has been so well managed that, in conjunction with the brilliant and urgent audio, there's no time to wonder what's behind the buildings either side of your field of view.



"It's one of the best looking PSP games yet seen"



The scenery in the lead up to Paris is realistically presented.



CALL OF DUTY

PSP



Some levels are set entirely in the air requiring you to work your way quickly from turret to turret.

> Call of Duty continued

While inevitably down-sized from its console cousins, the game still features all of the series' hallmarks with diverse weaponry and impressive set-pieces. For example, in the first campaign, where you play as a Yank storming Altavilla, a plane tears black smoke lines in the overhead sky before hotly punctuating a country lane metres in front of your eyes. It's extraordinary stuff to witness on a handheld.

The PSP's control system has suffered much critical disdain for its inability to properly manage First Person Shooters but these shortfalls are evened out with a smart and easy to use auto-targeting system that never feels as though it's patronising you. Movement is handled by the analogue



The game's set-pieces are expertly handled.

nub while, as is now standard methodology in PSP FPS titles, the four face buttons control your ability to look around. You can easily switch to a manual aim where you look down the rifle and it's surprisingly quick and painless to line up even long shots on your enemies.

The D-pad allows for quick reloads,

"It's extraordinary stuff to witness on a handheld."

weapon swapping, holding breath (to improve manual aim) as well as grenade throwing and managing your stance. You're scored on the time it takes to get through a level, your accuracy, the number of shots you fire, and kills and head shots: these stats go towards securing you a medal ranking for the level.

The three campaigns can be played through at one of three difficulty levels

GUN-STAR HERO

It pays to be ambidextrous

Two weapons can be held at any one time and you can easily swap new guns in and out when in the field by trading with felled comrades and foes. Guns include many familiar names to Call of Duty veterans including the Thompson submachine gun, M1 Garand, and the German MP40. Just like with other titles in the series it's possible to 'cook off' grenades before launching them at the enemy.

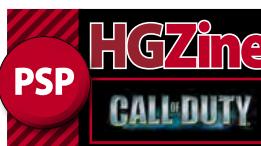


(green, hardened and veteran) and, while the levels are short and snappy, even without the final polish the game will inevitably receive over the next few weeks, Call of Duty seems to have successfully overcome the hardware restrictions that have blighted other PSP first person shooters. Even our preview build of the game ably demonstrated a memorable, and affecting recreation of one of history's darkest geographical and ideological scrambles. ●

LOCKED AND LOADED

Packed to the gills with extras

There's bonus material in the form of new movies, as well as wikipedia-style factual entries on the various in-game weapons, vehicles, armour and artillery. For the persistent it's possible to unlock wallpapers to use on your PSP's dashboard as well as a few cheats.



PSP

CALL OF DUTY

HOW COMPLETE?



100%

FIRST IMPRESSIONS



92%

It should be a tour de force for handheld shooters

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KONAMI



From the creators of
Metal Gear Solid®

FROM
OUT OF THE
darkness
COMES **light**

LUNAR KNIGHTS™



Let there be light as Kojima Productions unveils its biggest title for Nintendo DS™. A true battle of good and evil, *Lunar Knights* stars two heroes with very different skills: one empowered by light, the other by darkness. Together, they must combine their skills to repel an alien invasion within a stunning 2D and 3D play area. Making superb use of the touch-screen capabilities of the Nintendo DS™, and featuring an incredible array of adversaries, *Lunar Knights'* incredible gameplay shines brightly...



12+
www.psu.org

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NINTENDO DS

SPECIAL REPORT

Final Fantasy Free-For-All

Not really all that final at all.

COUNTLESS remakes, spin-off series, numbering inconsistencies and sequels: to an outsider, the Final Fantasy series could seem impenetrable. No need to worry, though, as we're here with our guide to the upcoming Final Fantasy portable games. So, pick up your sword and let's get adventuring!

Final Fantasy III

ETA: Summer 2007

Lineage: Remake of Final Fantasy III (NES)

Originally released in Japan in 1990 for the NES, Final Fantasy III is the only numbered Final Fantasy game to have not been translated for the West. Here remade in full-3D and using the DS' graphical abilities to the full, Final Fantasy III introduced the 'job system', where players assign characters with jobs such as Knight or White Mage and develop your party to your liking.



Going 3D allows for some dramatic battlefields.

We can't go after him...because dwarves can't swim! But you're humans! Humans can swim! You must aid us with your amphibious abilities!

KEY FACT
Cutting-edge graphics mask an old-fashioned RPG, so expect forced levelling

Final Fantasy Fables: Chocobo Tales

ETA: April 15th (US), TBC (UK)

Lineage: Chocobo's Mysterious Dungeon

Describing this as a cutesy throwaway spin-off of the Final Fantasy series would be a great injustice, whatever appearances may say. Chocobo Tales sees you adventuring into picture books to save your trapped chocobo friends, via the medium of an extensive card battle duelling system and over thirty addictive mini-games. We loved the Japanese version and can't wait for a release over here.

DS



KEY FACT
Cute and happy but deceptively deep: don't let first impressions fool you

Only by going through all the picture books can you save all the chocobos.

Final Fantasy VII: Crisis Core

PSP

ETA: 2007 (Japan), TBA (US, UK)

Lineage: Final Fantasy VII

KEY FACT
Less turn-based and more dynamic, Crisis Core should be action-packed

Despite a rapidly-approaching Japanese release, little is known about Crisis Core, except that it takes place before the events of Final Fantasy VII and revolves around the relationship between Zack and Cloud during their time in the Shinra company. Beautiful graphics and fast-paced sword battles should add up to a solid title that'll give the PSP the push it so desperately needs in Japan.



Expect much more action and much less line-dancing.

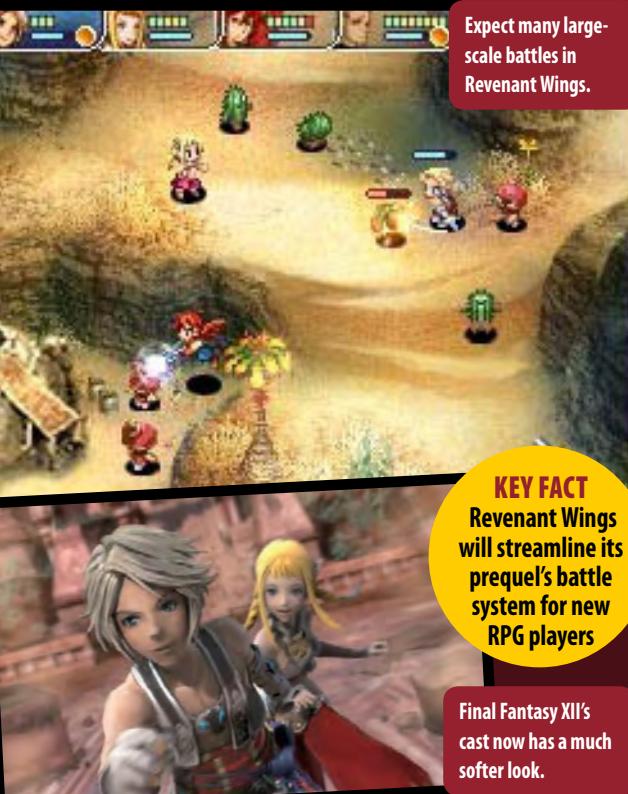
Final Fantasy XII: Revenant Wings

DS

ETA: 26th April 2007 (Japan), TBA (US, UK)

Lineage: Final Fantasy XII

Almost universally lauded for its attempts to rejuvenate the franchise, Final Fantasy XII's real-time battle system is set to get its second outing in Revenant Wings. The game is once again centred around Vaan and Penelo, who are now fully-fledged sky pirates scouring the world for mystical stones, but expect all the old gang to pop in at some point.



Expect many large-scale battles in Revenant Wings.

KEY FACT
Revenant Wings will streamline its prequel's battle system for new RPG players

Final Fantasy XII's cast now has a much softer look.

Final Fantasy V Advance

GBA

ETA: 16th March (UK)

Lineage: (Remake of) Final Fantasy V (SNES)

Final Fantasy V takes Final Fantasy III's job system and improves upon it, bringing even more strategic choice into the development of your group of warriors, but suffers from a weaker story than IV or VI.



Final Fantasy V: possibly the most legitimate game of dress-up around.

Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles: Ring of Fates

ETA: TBA Lineage: Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles (GameCube)

Final Fantasy goes co-op, with full support for ad-hoc wireless and the Nintendo Wi-Fi connection. Little is known about the game at this point, except that it will play very similarly to its GameCube predecessor.



DS

Ring of Fates is designed to be played with four people, but fewer are supported.

Final Fantasy Tactics: The Lion War

PSP

ETA: 2007 (Japan), TBA (US, UK)

Lineage: (Remake of) Final Fantasy Tactics (PSX)

Taking the Final Fantasy focus on story and applying it to a grid-based strategy game was a work of genius, with a twisting politically themed story and a variation of Final Fantasy III's job system. Essential for strategy fans.



The FF Tactics remake features cartoon-styled cutscenes used to forward the story.

Final Fantasy VI Advance

GBA

ETA: TBA (UK)

Lineage: (Remake of) Final Fantasy VI (SNES)

Considered by many to be the best of the series, Final Fantasy VI surprised many with the emotional depth of its story and musical score. While the battling may feel slightly simplistic, if you need dramatic motivation there's currently no handheld equal.



Final Fantasy VI mixes cyberpunk and magic.

"Final Fantasy VI surprised many with the emotional depth of its story"

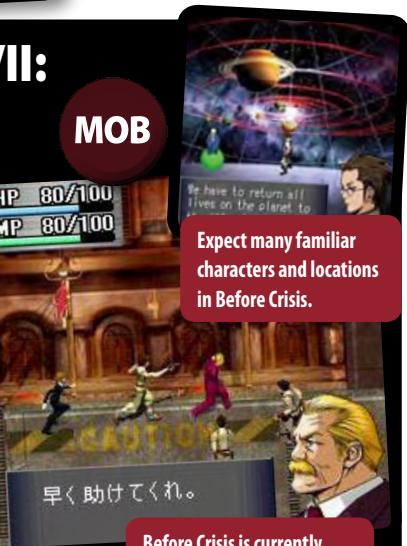
Final Fantasy VII: Before Crisis

MOB

ETA: 2004-2007 (Japan), TBA (US, UK)

Lineage: Final Fantasy VII

Another Final Fantasy VII prequel, Before Crisis centres on the Turks' activities prior to the main game. Released across twenty-five episodes in Japan, it was announced for a 2006 release in the US, although unfortunately there has since been no word on the title's status.



Expect many familiar characters and locations in Before Crisis.

Before Crisis is currently being ported to other Japanese mobile networks.



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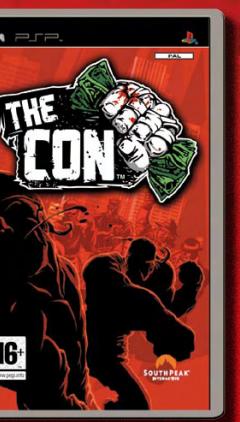


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DS

HARVEST MOON DS

Publisher: Rising Star
 Developer: Natsume
 Heritage: Harvest Moon
 Link: www.natsume.com

ETA: April

PSP

HARVEST MOON:

INNOCENT LIFE
 Publisher: Rising Star
 Developer: Marvelous
 Heritage: Harvest Moon
 Link: www.risingstargames.com

ETA: April



"A Harvest Moon game wouldn't be complete without a glitch"

HARVEST MOON SPECIAL

Harvest Festival: 20 things you didn't know about **Harvest Moon**

Can't tell your ores from your elbow? We've got the know-hoe

MOON TRIVIA

1. Did you know? A Wonderful Life has three versions - the original game, Another Wonderful Life (or A Wonderful Life For Girls) also on Gamecube, and A Wonderful Life: Special Edition, released later on PS2.

2. Magical Melody started out as Poem of Happiness in Japan, then came a revamped version called Poem of Happiness: For World. It's this improved iteration that was translated into Magical Melody.

3. In Back To Nature, the strange

amphibious creature found in the lake is actually a piece of Japanese folklore, the mythical Kappa. Legend says it feeds on children, but in Back To Nature a simple cucumber will suffice.

4. Yasuhiro Wada is considered 'the father of Harvest Moon'. Having produced the original instalment, he's been involved all the way up to A Wonderful Life on Gamecube.

TIPS, TRICKS AND GLITCHES

5. A Harvest Moon game wouldn't be complete without a glitch, and the one in A Wonderful Life is a doozy - cook one portion of Ruby Spice on its own and you'll magically produce another while keeping the original. Repeat this over and over for a ton of cash.

6. Talking of mistakes, the title screen for Harvest Moon 64 saw the developer Natsume mis-spell their own name, as 'Natsume'! Admittedly there's a complicated excuse involving phonetics, but still...

7. Useful Moon tips? Planning your day is the key. Keep an eye on your calendar at all times to make sure you don't miss any special events, and it's always useful to take notes for shop opening and closing times.

8. Save often. There's nothing worse than making a small mistake early on and ruining an entire crop or allowing an animal to die. It helps when you're experimenting with recipes too - rather than wasting valuable food on dishes that don't work out, it's best to restart

OLD GAMES

The waning Moon



Harvest Moon (SNES) 

Back To Nature 

Friends Of Mineral... 

A Wonderful Life 

Magical Melody 

Harvest Moon (SNES)

The game that started it all off. Over ten years old now - if you're going from the Japanese release date, though it took nearly eighteen months to hit Europe - the original Moon is still considered by some to be the best. In reality, some aspects look dated compared to later versions, but this is still worth a look for retro-heads.

>

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DS



PSP

"Getting your hands dirty in the mines is essential to progress"



> Harvest Moon continued

and combine the original ingredients in new ways. You'll soon find the blend.

9. Getting your hands dirty in the mines is essential to progress. Grab as many ores as you can – they're worth a fair few quid if you ship them but they can also upgrade your tools.

THE FARMER WANTS A WIFE

10. Courtship is one of the most prominent aspects of the series, and there's rarely a shortage of partners to choose from. Most Moons offer five, though A Wonderful Life presents a miserly three, while Magical Melody has a particularly generous ten for each gender.

11. As for attracting a partner, it pays to be creepy. Stalk the object of your affection in any spare time you get to find out where they go and when. They're sticklers for routine, you see.



12. If you're after a challenge, try wooing A Wonderful Life's sulky Nami instead of homely Celia or flirty barmaid Muffy.

FAMILY TIES

13. Many Harvest Moon games are linked, with characters and locations returning from previous games, but Marvelous took that one step further with Friends of Mineral Town and A Wonderful Life. Using the GBA to GC link cable allows items, biographies and music tracks to be transferred between the two.

14. Similarly, Friends of Mineral Town can be combined with Harvest Moon DS to unlock five further partners in the latter - however, marrying one of these means Game Over.

DARK SIDE OF THE MOON

15. Moon games have never shied away from the subject of death - the first Gameboy version saw the ghost of your dead grandfather giving you one year to look after his farm...

16. ...while A Wonderful Life not only sees the early death of elderly villager Nina, but actually ends with the player's character passing on, leaving the farm to his son. Moving stuff indeed.

17. Despite the sweetness-and-light looks, the series isn't quite as wholesome as you might think. In Harvest Moon 64 for example, it pays to drink alcohol during the year, as it can impress the girls if you drink them under the table at the New Year festival.

18. In Magical Melody, androgynous rival rancher Jamie changes sex - but not appearance - depending on your farmer's gender. It's hard to achieve, but you can also marry him/her. Very strange.

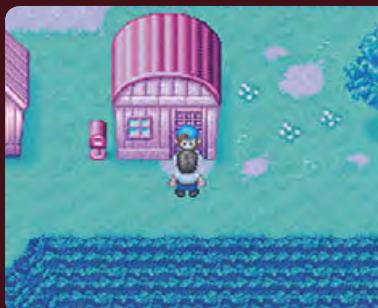
THE FUTURE

19. So what does the future hold for Harvest Moon? Well, Wii gamers can exhaust themselves with the most physically-punishing Moon yet - Tree of Peace - which has you using your Wii remote to dig and hoe your land.

20. And DS owners have yet another title to look forward to. Rune Factory: A Fantasy Harvest Moon sees the addition of a cave full of monsters to domesticate for farmyard assistance!

NEW GAMES

The waxing Moon



Harvest Moon DS



Innocent Life (PSP)



The Island... (DS)



Harvest Moon DS

Fans of A Wonderful Life will be in their element with this return to Forget-Me-Not Valley. The Witch Princess has accidentally sent the Harvest Goddess and 101 Harvest Sprites to another world (as you do) and you're tasked with returning them using that tried-and-trusted HM gameplay. Doesn't look much of a departure from Friends of Mineral Town, but should still be as addictive as ever.

KONAMI

"An essential title"

Official Nintendo Magazine

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DS

Lunar Knights

Boktai gets a re-vamp.

Publisher: Konami
Developer: Kojima Productions
Heritage: Boktai: The Sun is in Your Hand, Diablo
Link: www.uk.games.konami-europe.com/
ETA: March 16th (UK)

When you think about it, we owe Buffy a lot. What may have seemed merely bubblegum pop-culture was, in reality, a public service announcement par excellence. Thanks to the Californian valley girl and her other vampire-themed brethren through the ages, should a vampire army suddenly rear its disfigured head, there's hardly a person in the world who wouldn't know how to dispose of them. A stake through the heart or sunlight: either will do, right?

Imagine the trouble we'd be in, then, if the vamps got wise to their weaknesses. Suppose, for example, they enlist the help of aliens to develop a stake-proof armour and the paraSOL, an interstellar sunshade designed to cast the Earth into eternal night. Suddenly, our training isn't quite so useful. The time is ripe for an undead uprising.

Humanity's hope falls on the moody Lucian and naïve Aaron, young men destined to become the masters of Dark and Light. Lunar Knights is actually a sequel to Boktai, a GBA game which required users to put their portable in the sun to charge up the main character's solar power.

Aaron's speciality is ranged combat, whereas Lucian is a melee fighter.



In a move that those of us in this part of the world should be grateful for, Lunar Knights ditches the solar sensor idea and instead buffs itself up on action steroids.

Whistle for it

Most of the game is spent running through dungeons as either Aaron or Lucian, hammering the Y button to attack with Aaron's solar guns or Lucian's dark swords. Fighting remains exciting thanks to your enemies' sophisticated attack patterns, always requiring your full attention and judicious use of the block button, and further challenge is presented by frantic boss battles that require both boys' differing dark/light melee/ranged abilities to be used to the full.

Previously a large element of the older Boktai games, stealth has very little part to play here, despite coming from Metal Gear Solid creator Hideo Kojima's stable. Whistling into the DS' microphone can be used to distract enemies which, considering that damage is doubled if you attack monsters from behind, still provides >

"The time is ripe for an undead uprising"



> Lunar Knights continued

enough incentive not to charge around. However, reduced stealth abilities – such as no longer being able to press yourself against walls – may alienate old Boktai fans.

A generous amount of side-quests are present to supplement the short main quest-line, but whether or not you'll want to revisit old areas is a different matter. Despite the accomplished combat system, after a while it's hard to shake off the feeling that you're simply doing the same

thing again and again. Even worse, there's a distinct lack of variety in the enemy types, and the fact that towns are limited to simple menus further restrains the already small amount of exploration available.

Still, if you like your RPGs with an extra helping of action there's very little out there to rival *Lunar Knights* on the DS; providing you can push yourself onwards when it occasionally feels like a slog, that is. Beautiful at first, but a touch repetitive towards the end: not entirely unlike Sarah Michelle Gellar's career, then. ●

DARK SIDE OF THE MOON

The inner workings of Lunar Knights

1. Costa del Sol



2. Stake Invaders



3. Terrestrial Downpour



1. Costa del Sol

Guns and elemental attacks are powered by energy, collected by standing under skylights in dungeons. Aaron's light energy can only be charged during the day, while Lucian's dark energy is only chargeable at night. As such, energy conservation is a much bigger deal when controlling Aaron, who is left unable to attack should he run out.



Expect large Konami-style boss battles to test your skills.



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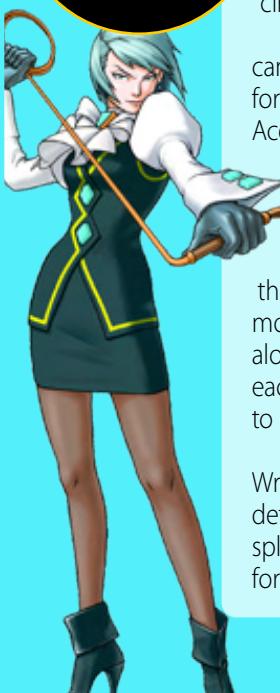
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DS

Phoenix Wright Ace Attorney: Justice for All

Publisher: Capcom
 Developer: Capcom
 Heritage: Monkey Island, Ally McBeal
 Link: www.capcom.com/
 aceattorney/
 ETA: March 23 (UK)



All rise for the honourable Phoenix Wright's return

Affidavits, decrees, statutes, gavels. Let's be honest: law is boring. There's good reason why kids don't play 'lawyers and judges': full of impenetrable jargon and slower than your average reality TV contestant, to some eyes it appears simply pomp and circumstance dressed in stupid wigs.

Or so we thought. And then he came along, changing our perceptions forever. Since 2006's Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney burst onto the DS with its devil-may-care, high-octane approach to the judicial system, we've not been able to look at the

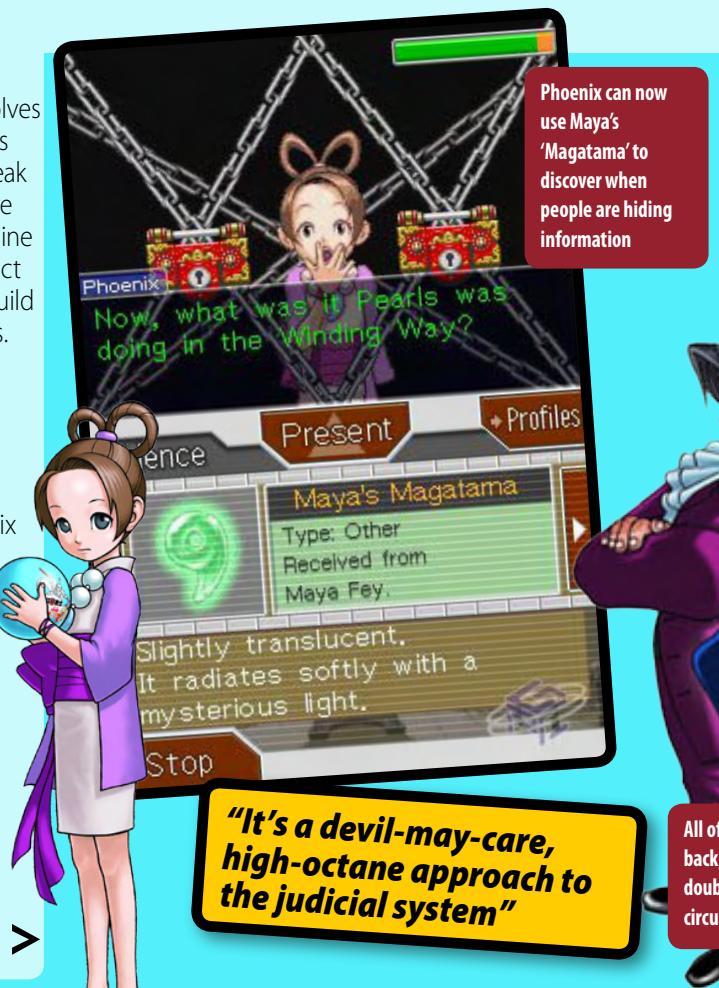
law in the same way. Thankfully for those of us who've grown hungry for more legal-eagling, he's back, tugging along four new case files with him, each one bursting with wrongs waiting to be Wrighted (sorry).

For those new to the series Phoenix Wright is equal parts lawyer and detective, with the gameplay similarly split in half. The courtroom is the stage for furiously twisting power-struggles

against the prosecution, which involves spotting flaws in witness statements and pressing on them until they break down. The investigative sections are more sedate, requiring you to examine crime scenes for evidence and collect information from witnesses, all to build the case for your court appearances.

Crystal ball

Aside from all-new cases to solve, there's not a huge amount that's different to what we saw in Ace Attorney. Most substantially, Phoenix can now use his sidekick Maya's 'magatama' to see when people are withholding information from him. By formulating theories as to what they're hiding and presenting supporting evidence, Phoenix can break down their defences and dig up the dirt. Essentially it brings some of the courtroom into the sleuthing sections, blurring the gameplay style-boundaries between the previously distinct elements.



The game's first case acts as a tutorial... by giving Phoenix a little dose of temporary amnesia.



All of the old gang are back, although in no doubt convoluted circumstances.

CAST-IRON ALIBI

We'll see you in court

1. Phoenix Wright



2. Maya Fey



3. Franziska von Karma



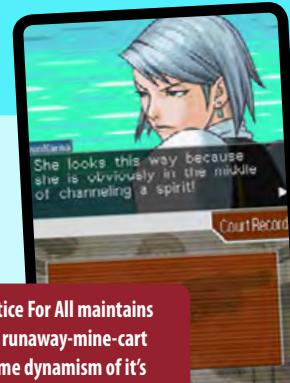
1. Phoenix Wright

Defender of the innocent, Phoenix Wright is an unbeaten defence attorney. He deeply admired Mia Fey, who employed and trained him into the lawyer he is today, and took over her law firm after her unfortunate demise. While possessive of a slightly cynical and sarcastic side, he tries his upmost for his clients – who often try him equally in return.



> **Phoenix Wright** continued

While the changes aren't dramatic, the game was never about the mechanics: similar to the detective serials that Justice for All so clearly bases itself on, it's the cases themselves that keep the interest, and it's here where the game doesn't let you down. The murders themselves are inventive and rarely predictable, with a cast of characters so overblown it's hard to suppress the smiles. We could go on and on, but doing so could spoil the experience slightly, so we promise we won't start gushing about the way



Justice For All maintains the runaway-mine-cart anime dynamism of its predecessor.

[snip!] just [whew!]s everything in her path, or the perverted [sheesh!], or, or...

Sadly, the game features little in the way of touchscreen interaction, with none of the chemical-spraying evidence-examining trickery that the final chapter of Ace Attorney so ably demonstrated. Also, the game still occasionally hitches up its skirt and shows its varicose stubbornness, in situations where it's impossible to prove a point because the game only wants specific evidence at specific, fixed moments in time.

And yet, despite that, there's little to match the sheer exhilaration induced as the finger pointing and desk-slammng crescendos into the final realisation of the real criminal. Rarely does one game encompass drama, excitement and comedy as skilfully as this, leaving a game no DS owner should be without. ●

Ed Fear

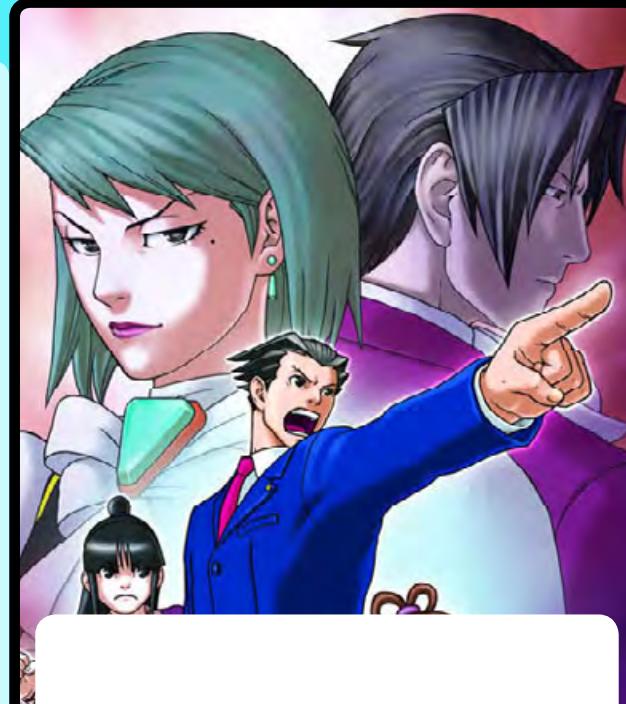


Profiles can now be presented in conversations, allowing you to glean more intel on characters.

"The murders are inventive and rarely predictable"



One of the cases revolves around Maya's spiritual power, leading you to a traditional Japanese town.



HGZine Verdict *A wonderful, deep detective puzzle game.*

DS

- Beautifully written
- Attractive visual style
- Occasionally clunky

5/5

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PSP



Prince of Persia: Rival Swords

The prince is in two minds about his latest adventure...

The Prince of Persia series has been thrilling gamers for over 15 years with its mix of magical stories and epic platform action. But would the opulent vision of classics like Sands of Time and Warrior Within be fatally compromised on the small screen?

In short, no. Well, not quite. Rival Swords is a re-imagined version of

Prince of Persia Two Thrones, with extra scenes and a fun two-player racing mode thrown in for good measure. You once again take on the role of the prince, this time returning to his home kingdom of Babylon only to find the streets ravaged by war. Worse still, his companion Kaileena, the Empress of Time has been kidnapped and the prince himself is being possessed by a dark version of himself.

Balancing act

What follows is a typically grandiose adventure filled with looming palaces, gloomy dungeons and persistent enemies, begging to fall victim to the game's varied and intuitive combat system. The visuals are impressively detailed, with set-piece locations dwarfing the lead character providing loads of levels to jump and swing from. Most of the fun comes from looking around the room, working out which of the prince's acrobatic moves you'll need to get from one side to the other – run along the walls and leap for it, or carefully walk along high planks using

"Visuals are impressively detailed... dwarfing the lead character"

This guy has fire in his belly.



A princely six-pack.

The streets of Babylon are no place for a young prince.



Another day another battle... the prince isn't short of enemies.

CHARIOTS OF FIRE

Princely adventures

Rival Swords introduces an exclusive series of chariot battle levels, bringing a new form of adrenaline-drenched racing gameplay to the series. Charging through the circuits crushing enemies is quite good fun in a Ben Hur sort of way, and provides a refreshing counterpoint to the tension of the single-player mode.



HGZine Verdict *The prince of platforming retains his crown. Just.*

PSP

- Impressive locations
- Excellent acrobatic moves
- Can be frustrating



Keith Stuart

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DS

Spectrobes

Disney's quest to clone Pokemon

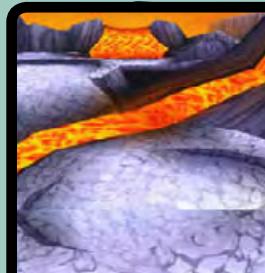
Unfortunately Spectrobes has been built on the premise that kids will buy anything. You can tell it's a title developed by committee rather than a talented individual with a singular vision. It's not that love and effort didn't go into its creation, more that its original checklist design

smacks of something drawn up by marketing people rather than insightful developers. Got to catch 'em all mechanic? Check. Nurturing and training features? Check. Creatures with individual properties? Check.

But kids are not daft and while Spectrobes shares many similarities with Nintendo's excellent Pokemon series it's lacking in one key area: charm. The game's two main characters, Rallen and Jeena, are about as charismatic as a mop and bucket. The story, which involves an interplanetary fight against creatures known as the Krawl, fails to engage and the titular Spectrobes all look like grumpy stones. Just like Pokemon you can raise and nurture your creatures then take a limited number into battle, but the combat is woeful with poor collision detection ruining any



Combat takes place inside surreal vortexes and involves a lot of sliding around the surface.



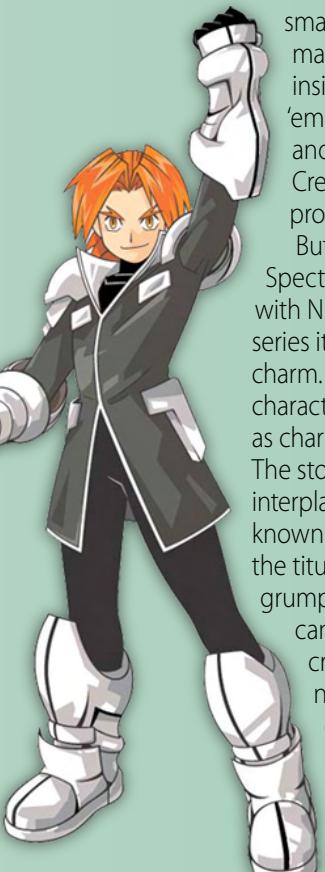
Planets are bland and exploration soon becomes a chore. A Spectrobes follows behind and is used much like a metal detector.



"You can raise and nurture your creatures then take a limited number into battle"



Excavating fossils and minerals is the most enjoyable part of the game.



sense of connection you might develop with your charges.

On the positive side, there's a wonderful Time Team-style excavation feature which tasks you with locating then digging up Spectrobes fossils. This is managed on the touch screen with drills, blowers and sprays aiding the excavation process and is easily the most fun part of the game. You can even blow air into the microphone to

dust them off. Considerable effort has also gone into the many Wi-Fi features which include exclusive downloads, one-on-one battles and the ability to exchange items and Spectrobes.

Disney clearly hopes this is going to be a playground phenomenon, but with its anaemic characters and dull story it's unlikely to provoke anything but peer ridicule. ●

Mark Walbank

PLASTIC EXTRAS

Each copy of the game comes with a couple of code breaker cards that allows you to unlock further Spectrobes features. The idea is to place the plastic lenticular lenses over your DS touchscreen and poke the stylus through the holes. Every individual lenticular card is different so swapping them with friends reaps greater benefits and more special powers. It's another gimmick and one likely to be as popular as those awful Barcode Battler games.

**HGZine
Verdict**

A poor Pokemon clone that's more old fossil than discovery

Superb excavation feature

Boring story

Terrible characterisation



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REVIEW ROUND-UP

PSP

Warriors

Publisher: Rockstar | Developer: Rockstar

Do anything short of street robbery to get your hands on this superb PSP interpretation of Walter Hill's seminal 1979 movie. The game largely takes place before the events of the film and sees you mugging, rioting and fighting your way through the tough New York streets. That would stack up to a whole lot of fun in its own right, but Rockstar has gone further and backed up the action with a fantastically absorbing story, deep and robust combat, plus some great unlockables and extras. In short this is one of the PSP's best titles to date and a movie tie-in that oozes quality. We loved the film, we love the game. Simply unmissable.



- Dramatic combat
- Spellbinding story
- Loading issues

Do we dig it? Yes!

5

- Easy-to-use interface
- Huge amount of variety
- It's over so quickly

Steep thrills

3

Publisher: Atari | Developer: Frontier Developments

Who in their right minds hasn't dreamed of creating the perfect rollercoaster then unleashing it on a gullible public? In this neatly designed amusement park strategy sim you get to do just that as well as dozens of other tasks from putting up the food outlets to ensuring the marketing department is doing its job. Of course, building rides is the best part and it's achieved via an approachable system that provides results in minutes. Problem is, the rest of the game is just as easy and can be completed in a day. But, as with the best amusement park visits, you'll remember it fondly for ages.



Every Extra Extend

Publisher: Disney | Developer: Q Entertainment

The original Every Extra was an intriguing 'bedroom coding' project distributed for free on PC. Q Entertainment's version takes the basic gameplay and accentuates it with stunning trippy visuals and pumping house music. The idea is to direct your spaceship into the midst of as many enemy craft as possible before detonating in a cascade of lights and chain reactions. Of course the basics are enlivened with bonus items, boss battles and the ability to earn new ships and it's astonishingly stylish stuff, but you have to become remarkably adept to make progress and some will find it all a bit too repetitive after a while.



- Amazing audio visual effects
- Intense gameplay
- Gets repetitive very quickly

Too much, over too soon

3

"Do anything short of street robbery to get your hands on Warriors"



Rocky Balboa

Publisher: Ubisoft | Developer: Ubisoft

The pensioned heavyweight lumbers back into the ring for one last fight – and it's a messy encounter bearing little relation to the latest movie, instead jumping around through Rocky's career like some sort of deathbed flashback. The controls are so complex you need a degree in punchology to get anywhere near the best out of them, while your opponents – including famous faces from the entire movie series – all pretty much fight the same way. Still, there are some classic Rocky moments to be had as you pound away in the ring causing palpable damage to your foe. Plus, the mass of options, modes and mini-games add some weight. Could have been a contender.



- Solid enough fighting
- Over-complicated controls
- Tired and messy

'Rocky' by name...

2

Recommended PSP Releases

Recent stuff you should try

Pirates!

(2K Games)
Take to the high seas in Sid Meier's thoroughly entertaining and open-ended pillage-'em-up.

Chili Con Carnage

(Eidos)
Ridiculously flamboyant action adventure set in a Mexico filled with stylised slow-motion gun battles and hot babes. What's not to like?

Sega Mega Drive Collection

(Sega)
Over 30 classic Sega games lovingly restored and accompanied by fascinating trivia and other extras.

GTA: Vice City Stories

(Rockstar)
Alright, it's been out for ages, but until a better drugs-'n'-guns action adventure comes along, it's staying!

Warriors

(Rockstar)
This one has split reviewers, but Rockstar titles often do – if you like everything else they've done you won't be disappointed.

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REVIEW ROUND-UP

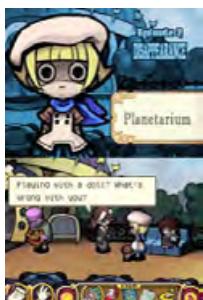
DS

Mystery Detective

Publisher: 505 Games | Developer: BeeWorks

After the likes of Phoenix Wright and Lost in Blue, here's further proof that Nintendo's DS is the ideal home for the sadly long-abandoned point-and-click genre. BeeWorks' Mystery Detective sees you taking charge of young amateur sleuth MacKenzie as she attempts to solve four mysteries in her small town. Using the stylus to move and examine items is simplicity itself, and the unique graphical style and smart humour carry the game when its obscure logic threatens to derail it.

Some of the puzzles just don't make sense. Still, at only six hours long, Mystery Detective is a short and very sweet treat for point-and-click fans.



- Delightful art style
- Genuinely witty dialogue
- Some devilishly tricky puzzles

Veronica Mars Lite

3

- Stylus controls work well, but...
- ...they make things far too simple
- Poor music for a Mizuguchi title

Puzzlingly poor

2

- Shen Gong Wu attacks look great
- AI ranges from hopeless to deadly
- Another mediocre tie-in

Shen gone wrong

2

- Interesting use of the stylus
- Endearing story and characters
- A bit one-dimensional

Passable Poké-fun

3



Gunpey DS

Publisher: Atari | Developer: Q Entertainment

Originally appearing on little-known Japanese handheld the Wonderswan, this stylus-controlled remake has the combined talents of Gameboy creator Gunpei Yokoi and Rez designer Tetsuya Mizuguchi to draw on. Sadly, Gunpey DS displays little of their genius. Tasked with joining upwardly-scrolling tiles to form an unbroken line across the screen, you'll soon be stifling a yawn at how easy it all is. Even the typical Q Entertainment music element, which here lets you create your own tunes using the in-game sounds, fails to hold your attention for longer

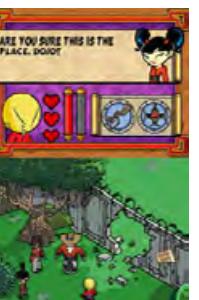
than a few minutes. The overly gaudy graphics and limited lasting appeal are the final nails in this puzzler's coffin. Try the PSP version instead.

Xiaolin Showdown

Publisher: Konami | Developer: Razorback

Based on the popular-in-America animated series, Xiaolin Showdown is an isometric roaming beat-em-up that sadly fails to live up to the impressive presentation. Some decent cel-shaded visuals, short but enjoyable cinematics and superb voice work can't mask the incredibly repetitive button-mashing gameplay. The AI is also hit and miss, which can make the whole experience frustrating too – far too easy to be swamped by enemies, while combos are useless for the

most part. The few minigame diversions are more worthy of your gaming time, but that's hardly a worthwhile reason to part with your cash.



Pokémon Rangers

Publisher: Nintendo | Developer: HAL Laboratory

Those unable to wait for the big Diamond and Pearl releases could do a lot worse than sample this spin-off title, which puts you in the shoes of a young Pokémon Ranger – a sort of caring police force that protects cute creatures. Your role in this fairly traditional action RPG is to thwart a plan by the evil Go-Rock Squad to control all the pokémon in the land. You do this by exploring four quaint cities, picking up clues and, most importantly, capturing escaped pokémon by

drawing circles around them using the stylus. It's much more difficult and absorbing than it sounds and the fun story keeps you amused.



"Further proof that Nintendo's DS is the ideal home for the point-and-click genre"

Recommended DS Releases

Recent unmissable goodies

Mario vs Donkey Kong 2

(Nintendo)
Engrossing puzzler/platformer with all the great Mario characters and more charm than you can handle.

Children of Mana

(SquareEnix)
Dungeon-based RPG action with gorgeous visuals and music and relentless playability.

Castlevania: Portrait of Ruin

(Konami)
The classic platforming series comes to DS and doesn't disappoint with a well-structured gothic adventure.

Mario Slam Basketball

(Nintendo)
Everything you expect from a Mario sports title with a truly innovative control system and lots of laughs.

Lunar Knights

(Konami)
Imaginative Gothic sci-fi RPG action from Kojima Productions, the makers of Metal Gear no less.

MOBILE REVIEWS

All the latest from the world of mobile phone gaming



4 Wheel Xtreme 3D

Publisher: I-play

A decent stab at offroad driving, complete with chunky SUVs and seriously undulating tracks. Sadly, the draw distance is minuscule, so you can barely see where you're going. Also, there's little sense of drift or wheel spin. The backgrounds and car models are good though, and there's enough of a challenge to keep you occupied.

- Lots of vehicles and events
- Terrible draw distance
- No sense of handling depth

Offroad but not offputting

3

- Massive areas to explore
- Lot's of great RPG features
- Secret areas = replayability

*The dungeon master***5**

Orcs and Elves

Publisher: EA

Doom RPG developers id and Fountainhead are back with this wonderful retro dungeon adventure. You play a young warrior tasked with exorcising an evil force from a Dwarven fortress – which naturally involves battling with orcs, trolls and other monsters using weapons and spells. The interface is simplicity itself, but there's plenty to explore, tons of secret areas and a complex character progression system with reams of stats. Amazing.



Football Manager Quiz

Publisher: Glu

Sadly, there's no full conversion of Football Manager planned, but this quiz game may suffice for now. Pick your favourite team then answer multiple choice questions to work your way up the pitch and eventually score a goal – at each stage, there's a choice of question themes, taking in cup history, general knowledge, team facts, etc. Luckily, you get a certain amount of passes per game, allowing you to skip tough questions – a good job as some are obscure. Modes offer one-off matches, tournaments and even a basic pub quiz.

- Good range of questions
- Stylish presentation
- No two-player mode

Trivial but worth pursuing

Centipede

Publisher: Glu

Atari's classic arcade shooter from 1980 gets a caring modern day mobile make-over courtesy of prolific publisher, Glu. As usual your job is to clear a garden of incoming centipedes, blasting them segment by segment until they're completely squished – then it's on to the next wave. Spiders, fleas and scorpions occasionally crop up to provide different targets, and in the updated PowerUp mode you can collect more powerful weapons to attack them with. Really, though, this is just another retro arcade conversion and without the iconic appeal of Space Invaders or Galaxians it'll be of interest only to complete Atari nuts.



- New modes and options
- Basic, compelling shooter action
- Ultimately dated and limited

*Super Smash Bros. Lite***2**

RECOMMENDED

Four mobile games you must own

NOM (Living Mobile)
Probably the most innovative mobile game ever made.

Project Gotham Racing (Glu)
Breathtakingly good version of the triumphant Xbox racer.

Tornado Mania
(Digital Chocolate)
Control a tornado as it levels a city. Original and so much fun.

Lego Star Wars 2
(THQ Wireless)
Mini version of the already pretty cute console blockbuster.



Opposite Lock

Publisher: NumFum

Now this is how to design driving games on mobile phones. Forget 3D visuals and think about what a phone can actually do well. In this case it's fast, furious circuit races against highly aggressive AI cars, with a decent handling feel and some nice 2D visuals zooming past in the background. Where modern technology has been cleverly employed is in the Bluetooth multiplayer mode which lets up to eight mates compete against each other. It works surprisingly well, even if you have different phone models. With ten tracks to get through in the single-player tournament mode, there's plenty to do on your own, too.

- Nice handling feel
- Great circuits
- Genius Bluetooth support

*Realracing***5**



Inbox

Thanks for all your emails about the first issue – it seems you like what we're doing, and have some great ideas about how we can add to the formula. Please do keep those coming in. And if there's anything else you want to say about handheld and mobile games, sling us an email. We're at hgzine@gamerzines.com

Plus, if you like what we're doing don't forget to tell all your mates about www.gamerzines.com

Cheers,
Keith

Don't miss Issue 3

Out April 5th

Sign up now!



CONGRATULATIONS ON A FANTASTIC first issue. When do I get the next one? Now, now, now! Your 'active' format is great, it really brings the games to life and gives the reader a much better feel for a game than plain reviews. The reviews are informative and I particularly liked the side by side format of the reviews roundups.

As an owner of both a PSP and a DS it's certainly refreshing to see all the reviews in one magazine and also good to see the lesser covered format of mobile phone gaming.

> **Phil 'Yosser' Hughes**

> Thanks for your email, Yosser (We thought you might be asking us to gissa job). It's great that you see the importance of having a magazine dedicated to handheld games. You're spot on about the active content, too. Nothing beats seeing a game in action – although naturally, our talented writers get pretty close sometimes...

THE DS AND PSP COVERAGE IS GREAT, but I think the mag needs more in depth coverage of mobile games – and since the PSP and DS are region-free what about some import reviews?

> **David Harold**

> We'll look into both of your suggestions, David. Import games certainly deserve a mention.

VERY IMPRESSED, HOW ABOUT A roundup of essential games for the PSP and DS and what to avoid?

> **Tony Aitken**

> Thanks Tony. Providing a list of recommended titles is definitely something we'll do – we're just working out where to squeeze it in.

I THINK GAMERZINES ARE AMAZING. Sometimes I get tired of looking at websites for content, so it's cool that the content can be viewed in magazine form. I actually look forward to GamerZines each month, just like I would a real mag. Best of all these can be read in complete darkness.

> **Shane**

> Cheers Shane, but this is a real mag! Websites can be a bit of an assault on the senses, which is why this format works so well – you can just sit back (yes, Shane, even in complete darkness) and peruse it at your own speed.

THE MAGAZINE WAS FANTASTIC, VERY well laid out, nothing short of what you'd expect in a full price shop magazine. Only slight quibble would be with the DS/PSP reviews: can we have a check-box for online play, as a lot of the time I buy games based on whether or not they have it, and it can be hard to find out at a glance?

> **Rob Talbott**

> Thanks, Rob, another very good idea. I'll talk to our designers and see if we can come up with something for the next issue.



Our first issue.
Judging by your
email responses
we're doing okay!

READER FEEDBACK!
Click here to
send us a
letter now!

David Harold wants to see more mobile games coverage in the mag.



LEGEND OF ZELDA MOST WANTED

Last month we asked what you'd like to see in Phantom Hourglass. You said...

I'D LIKE TO BE ABLE TO CUSTOMISE Link's ship and clothing, then show off my new designs online!

> **Kelly**

IT WOULD BE GREAT TO SEE SOME of the classic Zelda characters coming back into this game. Isn't it time Error and Bagu made another weird appearance?

> **Zac**

ONLINE MULTIPLAYER! OR AT least a proper four-player co-op mode via wireless. The battle mode looks like fun, but a Zelda where you get together with other players would be amazing. I suppose everyone would fight over who gets to play as Link, though.

> **Sam Heady**

IT WOULD BE INTERESTING TO SEE a link-up mode between this and a Wii Zelda game – sort of like what they did with Four Swords, which could be connected from Game Cube to Game Boy via cable. You could swap items between the games, etc. Of course, we're going to have to wait five years for the next Wii Zelda game...

> **Jamie Warrington**

Honey, we shrunk the game!

UK studio Sumo Digital takes big console games and squeezes them on to PSP. Here's how...

How do you go about bringing a full-sized console game to PSP? It's pretty much like working with any console platform. Just smaller.

The first question is how much of the existing code and assets can be re-used? PSP, like PS2, has 32MB of system memory, but for PSP we really only have 24MB of memory to play with as 8MB is used up by the system to run the XMB menu. So that's a measly 24MB you've got to hold everything!

Even though PSP has the biggest handheld screen yet, fine detail can get lost, so we judge where we really need it. Say for OutRun, most of the time you're looking at the car, road and traffic so that needs the detail. Scenery back from the track will never be seen up close though, so we can reduce the

texture and model detail there.

Sound compresses well, so we squeeze that up to reduce memory use. Since the PSP is disk based, we can also stream music and video from the UMD, again saving on memory.

Code crunching

Next you'd look at code. We generally have to write a new renderer to do the graphics and new sound code, but a lot of the logic (the actual maths used to calculate what's happening in the game) can be reused. Once the game is up and running, we'll then profile it to find the slow bits. These then get

"That's a measly 24MB you've got to hold everything!"



re-written specifically for the PSP.

You also need to include PSP specific content. Take Virtua Tennis 3, this has ad-hoc multiplayer, or TOCA Race Driver 3 Challenge, which has customisable MP3 soundtracks. Don't forget control tuning either! Basically ensuring the game is fun, playable, and attractive to buy!

All this takes time, anywhere between six months to a year or so. You'll need a decent team too, usually a couple of experienced programmers and a team of artists.

Eventually you'll have a PSP game. Then you start over again! ●

Steven Lycett



From top: OutRun 2006 was a triumphant return for Sega's driving legend, while Virtua Tennis World Tour (bottom two screens) brought the classic Dreamcast and now PS3 sports sim to PSP in real style.



Steve Lycett is a producer at UK developer, Sumo-Digital. He's looked after the company's uniformly excellent translations of TOCA, OutRun 2006, and Virtua Tennis. The team are currently working on PS3 projects...



In HGZine Issue 3
THE BIG REVIEW

Driver 76

The guns, the cars, the hairstyles!

REVIEWS

Harvest Moon DS
Virtua Tennis 3
Burnout Dominator
And loads more!

PREVIEWS

Tomb Raider Anniversary
SOCOM
MGS: Portable Ops



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